

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 28319 241733Z
ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
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O R 241723Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6496
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 28319

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, TECH, PK, FR, US,GW
SUBJECT: SURFACING OF FRENCH-PAKISTAN
REPROCESSING ISSUE

1. FIRST DAY'S FRENCH PRESS COVERAGE OF THE EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ZIA AND GISCARD HAS PROVEN POSITIVE FROM THE FRENCH (AND US POINT OF VIEW. BOTH LE MONDE AND LE FIGARO EMPHASIZED THE NON-PROLIFERATION VALUE OF THE FRENCH DECISION TO SEEK A RENEGOTIATION OF THE CONTRACT. FIGARO AUGUST 24 FRONT PAGE HEADLINE PROCLAIMED: "GISCARD TAKES ANOTHER STEP ON BEHALF OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION." LE MONDE FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL SAME DAY SAID THAT ZIA'S STATEMENT SEEMS TO MARK THE END OF A LONG HISTORY; LE MONDE CALLED THE DENOUEMENT A "VICTORY FOR GOOD SENSE." BOTH PAPERS HINTED BROADLY THAT THE ONLY REASON PAKISTAN WANTED TO CONTINUE WITH THE REPROCESSING DEAL WAS TO BUILD A PLANT PRODUCING PURE PLUTONIUM USEABLE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

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2. THE ELYSEE ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 23 STRESSED THAT:

-- THE PURPOSE OF GISCARD'S LETTER TO ZIA WAS TO PROPOSE TO PAKISTAN THE EXAMINATION OF A WAY TO RECONCILE NONPROLIFERATION IMPERATIVES WITH THE FULFILLMENT OF THE 1976 CONTRACT;

-- THE FRENCH DESIRE TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS FOR A
REVISION OF THE CONTRACT;

-- FRANCE HAS OFFERED A PROLIFERATION-FREE CO-PROCESSING
ALTERNATIVE AND BELIEVES IT POSSIBLE TO RECONCILE
NONPROLIFERATION WITH THE RIGHT OF ALL COUNTRIES TO
PEACEFUL NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE US, FRENCH PRESS ACCOUNTS
DID NOT LEAN HEAVILY ON REFERENCES TO ANY US PRESSURE
ON FRANCE. FIGARO NOTED THAT FRENCH NONPROLIFERATION
POLICY HAD BEEN DECLARED IN 1976, BEFORE PRESIDENT
CARTER'S TERM OF OFFICE HAD BEGUN. LE MONDE REFERRED
TO US "CONCERN" OVER THE DEAL AND TO US PRESSURE ON
PAKISTAN (BUT NOT ON FRANCE). LE MONDE ADDED THAT THE
POSITIONS OF PARIS AND WASHINGTON ON NONPROLIFERATION
ARE GRADUALLY BECOMING CLOSER. IT ALSO NOTED THAT
THE END OF THE FRENCH-PAKISTAN AFFAIR RISKED REVIVING
THE PARALLEL DISPUTE BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BONN OVER
THE FRG REPROCESSING AGREEMENT WITH BRAZIL.

4. WE EXPECT AT SOME POINT SNIPING AGAINST THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT FROM THE GAULLISTS. BUT IT IS LIKELY
THAT GISCARD WILL HAVE LITTLE PROBLEM WEATHERING IT.
THE FACT THAT THE AFFAIR HAS BROKEN DURING THE AUGUST
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HOLIDAYS WILL HELP. IT IS ALREADY ENCOURAGING THAT
FIGARO, A DAILY WITH GAULLIST TENDENCIES, HAS CAST
THE FRENCH DECISION IN A FAVORABLE LIGHT. IT IS
ANOTHER QUESTION, OF COURSE, WHETHER THE PAKISTANI
GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT WITH EQUANIMITY THE OBVIOUSLY
OFFICIALLY INSPIRED HINTS IN THE FRENCH PRESS THAT
ISLAMABAD WANTED TO USE THE PLANT TO PRODUCE ATOMIC
WEAPONS.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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